



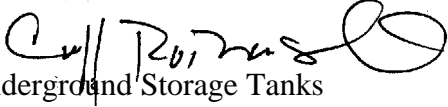
UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460
Mail Code 5401G

OCT — 1 2002

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY
RESPONSE

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Goals

FROM: Cliff Rothenstein 
Director, Office of Underground Storage Tanks

TO: EPA UST-LUST Regional Division Directors, Regions 1-10

I am pleased to announce our new national and regional cleanup goals for the underground storage tank (UST) program. The issuance of these goals is an important step for the UST program cleanup initiative, announced by the Agency two years ago as part of the four underground storage tank program initiatives. These goals aim to reduce our current (FY 02) national backlog of petroleum release sites by one-half or more in the next five years and continue our progress in protecting America's land and drinking water from leaking UST contaminants.

EPA and the states have made considerable progress in cleaning up contamination from underground tanks. Since the program's inception, more than 277,000 petroleum releases have been cleaned up. Despite this great progress, there are still over 145,000 cleanups that have yet to be completed. Unfortunately, our cleanup backlog has remained virtually steady for the past decade. In an effort to reduce our backlog and continue to advance the pace of cleanups, we consulted with regional and state managers and staff to discuss various options, including setting goals, to meet this challenge.

Based on suggestions we received from states and regions, I believe that the best way to proceed is to set cleanup goals expressed as a range. Therefore, we are establishing a national goal of completing between 18,000 and 23,000 cleanups each year for fiscal years 2003-2007, and corresponding regional cleanup goals (Attachment 1). The goals take into account historical and more recent cleanup performance and the existing cleanup backlog. By meeting the lower end of the range (the baseline goal), we will ensure that we maintain our historical cleanup performance. By achieving the upper end of the range (the high goal), we will be able to cut our current cleanup backlog in half, leaving 75,000 or fewer cleanups remaining by 2007.

Moreover, by expressing the national and regional goals as a range, I believe we are providing maximum flexibility for each region to consider state-specific circumstances in planning with state programs. This approach was strongly recommended by you and state managers. Given this flexibility and the historical and recent cleanup performance, I believe that the national and regional cleanup goals should be highly achievable. As such, I encourage you to include a commitment beginning in either your 2003 or 2004 EPA/state cooperative agreements. To assist you in meeting this important challenge, I am also sharing with you the cleanup range that we developed for each state based on past performance and existing backlog (Attachment 2). However, because we did not consider state-specific circumstances in developing this range, I would encourage each region to also carefully consider any state-specific issues when developing individual state goals. While working toward these cleanup goals is important, it is just as important to continue our progress in initiating cleanups. At the end of FY 02, states initiated cleanups at 90 percent of all confirmed release sites. I would encourage you to continue to work with your states so that we can maintain or exceed this level.

In addition to working with states to achieve these new cleanup goals, we are considering a change in the cleanup definition that will more accurately track cleanup progress. The change would allow a state to count those sites, where a release has been confirmed and the state has determined that no action is required, as a completed cleanup. This important change would ensure these sites are not counted as part of the backlog. Additionally, some EPA regional or state offices may also find it helpful to adopt an interim reporting measure of progress, particularly for states with a significant cleanup backlog. Some suggest tracking the number of approved corrective action plans. Others may want to track the number of tank cleanups in operation and maintenance or monitored natural attenuation phases, or adopt measures similar to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act environmental indicators, which track the control of contaminated groundwater migration and current human exposure pathways. I stand ready to support these and other efforts to get a better understanding of the progress being made to cleanup leaking tanks.

By setting new national and regional cleanup goals, we can aim to improve the performance of the UST cleanup program over the next five years. I will, of course, continue to look to the regions and states to monitor our progress, provide feedback and work with us to make any appropriate adjustments to our cleanup goals as we move forward. I will also continue to highlight and encourage wider use of tools, such as multi-site cleanup agreements, performance-based contracting, risk based decision making, and other innovative tools which will help accelerate the pace of tank cleanups.

I appreciate your support and look forward to working with you. Please contact me or Richard Mattick of my staff at 703-603-7154 with your comments or questions about this effort.

Attachments: (2)

cc: Marianne Horinko, OSWER
Mike Shapiro, OSWER
Barry Breen, OECA
Tom Dunne, OSWER
Eric Burman, OSWER
Regional Branch Chiefs
Regional Program Managers
OUST

ATTACHMENT 1

2003-2007 Annual Regional Cleanup Goals		
Region	Baseline Goal	High Goal
1	546	687
2	1,041	1,247
3	1,922	2,241
4	3,325	6,115
5	4,738	5,276
6	1,626	1,829
7	942	1,304
8	622	824
9	2,722	2,811
10	872	986
National Total: 18,355 - 23,319		

ATTACHMENT 2

State-by-State Annual Cleanups Completed Goals Guidance: 2003-2007

Region/State	Total Backlog	Percentage of Confirmed Releases not in Cleanup Completed Status	2003-2007 Cleanups Completed Final Goals	
			Baseline	High
CT	816	37%	63	97
ME	98	5%	17	19
MA	1,894	33%	233*	322
NH	900	45%	103	106
RI	295	26%	53*	59
VT	835	45%	77	83
Region 1 Subtotal	4,838	33%	546	687
NJ	3,609	42%	423	517
NY	3,290	19%	592*	658
PR	697	74%	24	70
VI	10	100%	1	2
Region 2 Subtotal	7,606	28%	1,041	1,247
DC	229	33%	40*	45
DE	830	30%	128*	166
MD	3,446	30%	679*	689
PA	4,723	38%	763*	944
VA	1,284	14%	230*	256
WV	1,333	52%	82	141
Region 3 Subtotal	11,845	30%	1,922	2,241
AL	1,911	19%	289*	382
FL	20,273	82%	346	2,027
GA	4,124	43%	571*	824
KY	2,792	24%	502*	558
MS	406	7%	73*	81
NC	7,021	31%	831*	1,404
SC	3,837	47%	464	561
TN	1,394	12%	250*	278
Region 4 Subtotal	41,758	40%	3,325	6,115
IL	9,546	47%	1,183	1,427
IN	3,892	52%	378	391
MI	9,087	47%	1,102	1,152
MN	1,470	18%	265*	294
OH	4,498	20%	809*	899
WI	5,567	31%	1,002*	1,113
Region 5 Subtotal	34,060	36%	4,738	5,276

* The annual goals presented in this table may be at or below state historical cleanup performance because of adjustments made to goals for backlogs that are below the national average. OUST encourages the regions to set state goals that, at a minimum, maintain historical level of corrective action performance.

ATTACHMENT 2

State-by-State Annual Cleanups Completed Goals Guidance: 2003-2007

Region/State	Total Backlog	Percentage of Confirmed Releases not in Cleanup Completed Status	2003-2007 Cleanups Completed Final Goals	
AR	383	35%	69*	76
LA	1,090	44%	130	141
NM	1,126	48%	48	123
OK	774	21%	139*	154
TX	6,678	29%	1,241*	1,335
Region 6 Subtotal	10,051	31%	1,626	1,829
IA	2,704	49%	312	506
KS	2,086	48%	130	209
MO	1,339	24%	240*	267
NE	3,220	56%	259	322
Region 7 Subtotal	9,349	44%	942	1,304
CO	1,318	24%	237*	263
MT	1,203	41%	138	168
ND	45	6%	8*	9
SD	592	26%	106*	118
UT	597	16%	107*	119
WY	1,467	75%	26	147
Region 8 Subtotal	5,222	30%	622	824
SA	3	100%	1	1
AZ	2,509	32%	451*	501
CA	15,051	41%	2,120	2,140
CNMI	6	100%	1	1
GU	18	16%	1*	3
HI	502	30%	90*	100
NV	327	14%	59*	65
Region 9 Subtotal	18,416	37%	2,722	2,811
AK	1,192	53%	119	152
ID	268	21%	48*	53
OR	2,242	35%	358	395
WA	2,620	43%	347	386
Region 10 Subtotal	6,322	39%	872	986
National Total	149,467	36%	18,355	23,319

* The annual goals presented in this table may be at or below state historical cleanup performance because of adjustments made to goals for backlogs that are below the national average. OUST encourages the regions to set state goals that, at a minimum, maintain historical level of corrective action performance.